

ILLINOIS LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

Topical Bulletin, October 2020

A news broadcast mentioned a survey recently taken in our country regarding religious beliefs, and of those polled only 52% believe Jesus ever existed. Furthermore, the same 52% hold that Jesus is not divine but was merely a good man who lived many years ago and fought against social injustice. The same survey specifically asked people who claimed they were “evangelicals” what they believed concerning Jesus, and 65% of them answered they hold Jesus Christ is but the “highest created being,” not eternal, and not God in the same sense as God the Father— Jesus being God in a lesser sense. Thus, we live in a society and age where there is much confusion about Jesus Christ, even in so-called Christian churches. Therefore, the question to be addressed and answered in the light of the Holy Bible in this month’s topical bulletin is: **Who is the real Jesus Christ?**

Interestingly, a computer search on the phrase “Jesus Christ” in the King James Version Holy Bible revealed 189 total hits in the New Testament. The first hit is in the first verse of the first chapter of the first book of the New Testament, Matthew 1:1; the second hit is in Matthew 1:18; and, the third hit occurs in Mark 1:1. We will presently look at those three Scripture verses.

“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” (Matthew 1:1)

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.” (Matthew 1:18)

“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” (Mark 1:1)

Comment: Observe that the Holy Bible clearly teaches Jesus Christ is a real human being, descended from Abraham and David according to the flesh. However, note that the Holy Bible also teaches Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost and NOT by any sinful man. Furthermore, the Holy Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, NOT merely a son of God. Hence, we already see from just three Bible verses that Jesus Christ is much more than merely a good man who lived many years ago and fought against social injustice.

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” (Matthew 1:18-23) “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14)

Comment: Isaiah prophesied of the birth of Jesus Christ, the virgin-born Son of God, over 700 years before the great event took place! Thus, Jesus Christ IS God manifest in the flesh!

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” (1 Timothy 3:16) “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)

Comment: Note well that Jesus Christ was “born” into this world as a little “child” AND is also “the mighty God” and “the everlasting Father.” Hence, Jesus Christ is true man and true God.

At the beginning of this topical bulletin it was noted that in a survey 65% of those polled who profess to be “evangelicals” – that is, Gospel-believing Christians – hold that “Jesus Christ is but the highest created being, not eternal, and not God in the same sense as God the Father.” We will now see what the Holy Bible has to say about such beliefs.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” (John 1:1-3, 14-18)

Comment: Observe that the Word was in the beginning with God and was in fact God, the Creator! The same Word was made flesh (took upon Himself a real human nature) and is the only begotten of the Father, obviously showing us that the Word who became incarnate IS THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD who is also known as JESUS CHRIST! Thus, Holy Scripture is clear in revealing to us that Jesus Christ IS THE ETERNAL GOD, eternally begotten of the Father! Jesus Christ is NOT the highest created being; Jesus Christ is true and very God from all eternity and was made man in time, for, “This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.” (1 John 5:6-9) Hence, the 65% of so-called “evangelicals” in the aforementioned survey blaspheme the Lord Jesus Christ when they hold and proclaim that Jesus Christ is but the highest created being, not eternal, and not God in the same sense as God the Father.

“But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” (Micah 5:2)

Comment: The above Old Testament prophecy also plainly teaches that the promised Messiah, the Christ, who would be born in time in Bethlehem is FROM EVERLASTING and is therefore the eternal only begotten Son of God.

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” (Colossians 2:8-9)

Comment: Observe that Jesus Christ is indeed NOT merely God in a lesser sense than the Father, for in Christ dwells ALL THE FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD bodily, for Jesus Christ is true God begotten of the Father from eternity and is also true Man born of the Virgin Mary in time.

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” (Jeremiah 23:5-6)

Comment: The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah prophesied of the Messiah, Jesus Christ the Lord and King who would descend from David’s royal line and would also be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, which in the Hebrew (transliterated) is Jehovah Tsidkenu. Yes, Jesus Christ IS JEHOVAH, the one true God— the Eternal! So, once again it’s plainly evident the 65% of so-called “evangelicals” in the aforementioned survey blaspheme the Lord Jesus Christ when they hold and proclaim that Jesus Christ is but the highest created being, not eternal, and not God in the same sense as God the Father. Let all such blasphemers repent and believe on the real Jesus Christ, the Jesus Christ of the Holy Bible.

“Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.” (John 14:28)

Comment: The above verse from the Gospel according to saint John is misused by certain professed Christians to promote their belief that Jesus Christ is but the highest created being, not eternal, and not God in the same sense as God the Father. For the right understanding, the reader needs to consider WHEN Jesus said the words, “my Father is greater than I.” Jesus made the statement while in His state of humiliation! So, at the time Jesus said His Father was greater it is because Jesus had laid aside the full and constant use of His divine attributes and prerogatives, for Holy Writ relates, “Christ Jesus... being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:5-11) Thus, since Jesus Christ completed His mission of mercy, our redemption, He has resumed the full and constant use of His divine attributes and prerogatives, and is worthy of equal honor with God the Father, for “all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.” (John 5:23) Therefore, comparing Scripture with Scripture the truth about Jesus Christ can be fully known.

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” (Galatians 4:4-5) “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself

likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." (Hebrews 2:14) "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself." (Hebrews 7:26-27) "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." (Romans 5:19)

Comment: The real Jesus Christ came into the world to redeem us sinners! Jesus Christ had to be true man in order to take our place under God's Law and in order to be able to suffer and die for us. The real Jesus Christ also had to be true God in order that His perfect keeping of God's Law might be sufficient for each and every sinner, and in order that His shed blood and atoning death would be able to pay for all the sins of all people, and in order that He might be able to overcome death and the devil for all of us! "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Romans 3:23-26) Let us regularly thank and praise Jesus Christ for who He really is and all that He has done and still does for us sinful human beings.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:16-18) "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also." (1 John 2:22-23) "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." (1 John 4:15)

Comment: God the Father lovingly sent His only begotten Son into the world to save the world. Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son, true God begotten of the Father from eternity and true man conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary in time to save us sinners. The name Jesus Christ means the Savior Anointed, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings who must be believed on if one would personally receive the forgiveness of sins and salvation, for it is written: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36) Accordingly, faith in the real Jesus Christ, the God-man, is vital if one would be saved and enter heaven when departing temporal life.

My friends, we obviously ALL need the Lord Jesus Christ, the Jesus Christ of the Holy Bible, the Jesus Christ who is our eternal Savior, the Jesus Christ who is the great I AM, the One Deliverer from doom, the One Mediator between God and men, the One King who is infinitely above all other kings, the Jesus who loves us and gave Himself for us, the One Savior sent by God the Father, the One Jesus Christ whom God the Holy Ghost has given us faith in if we are truly Christians. Oh beloved, "thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:57)

m.e.l.